Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the specification as indicated below.

*Please amend the **title** as follows (page 1, line 1 and page 67, line 2):*

MATER: A MATERNAL ANTIGEN ~~HUMAN GENE~~ CRITICAL TO FERTILITY

Please replace the paragraph on page 37, lines 18-26 with the following amended paragraph:

The PCR products were generated to span ~98% of the coding region from nt 76 to nt 3596. The 3' non-coding regions were determined by sequencing cDNA clones isolated from the human ovarian cDNA library using the PCR-cloned cDNA as probe. The first 75 nt at the 5' end were derived from a predicted cDNA of the genomic clone AC011470 (accessible on the world wide web at ensemble.org~~http://www.ensemble.org~~). The non-coding region present at the 5' end of the Mater cDNA remains undetermined. Assuming the presence of a poly(A) tail (~150-200 nt), assembly of the determined human *MATER* cDNA sequence, its poly(A) tail and 5' undetermined non-coding region correspond in size with the *MATER* transcripts detected in the Northern hybridization (4.2 kb; Example 3). This suggests that the cloned cDNA sequence represents a full-length coding region.

Please replace the paragraph on page 38, lines 11-15 with the following amended paragraph:

Computational analyses of DNA sequences and deduced peptide sequences were conducted using software available at the National Center for Biotechnology Information at NIH ~~(http://www.nbci.nlm.nih.gov)~~, the EMBL-EBI ~~(http://www.ensemble.org)~~, the Sanger Center ~~(http://www.sanger.ac.uk)~~ and the ExPASy Molecular Biology Server of the Swiss Institute for Bioinformatics ~~(http://www.expasy.ch).~~, and accessible via the websites of the respective organizations.